

# Chapter 4

## Section 1

*Section IV*  
**Relapse Prevention**

**A. Relapse Prevention**

This section of the program will focus on identifying high risk situations, sex vs love, victim empathy, and relapse plan completion.

**PROGRAM MATERIALS**

1. Individuals will complete chapters 1 – 7 and chapter 12 of the Relapse Prevention Workbook
  - A. Chapter 1 – Introduction to Relapse Prevention
  - B. Chapter 2 – Changing Thoughts
  - C. Chapter 3 – Stinking Thinking
  - D. Chapter 4 - Emotions
  - E. Chapter 5 – Choices
  - F. Chapter 6 – Urge Control
  - G. Chapter 7 – Understanding yourself
  - H. Chapter 12 – For Families
  - I. High Risk situation assignment
  - J. Relapse Prevention Plan worksheet(s)

## CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION TO RELAPSE PREVENTION

You are in a treatment program due to some type of inappropriate or harmful sexual activity. You probably would prefer to be somewhere else, but have been required to participate. You must be wondering why you have to be here and what this treatment stuff is all about.

"Why do I need treatment? I'll never commit a sex offense again. I've learned my lesson." Your therapist has heard statements like this many times. Yet history has taught that many younger people who have behaved like you have often do reoffend, sometimes soon after and sometimes many years later, *if they haven't had treatment*. In addition, the offenses they commit usually worsen or become more frequent as time goes on. Many male adult offenders in prison began offending as children and never had the opportunity to participate in a sex offender treatment program. You don't want that to happen to you. You want to be as sure as you can be that you will never commit a sex offense again. Your job now is to learn how to keep from ever committing a sex offense again.

That is why this workbook was written. It was designed to help *you* help *yourself*. Relapse Prevention is a fancy way of saying "I'll never slip back into sex offending behavior again." You can think of it as a kind of insurance policy against reoffending. It gives you the power to prevent your own sex offending behavior in the future.

"So, what's it all about?" you ask. That is what this book will explain to you. The exercises in this book will give you more understanding of yourself and your behavior and help you to stop yourself *before* you reoffend.

Now for an explanation of Relapse Prevention. *Relapse* simply means committing another sex offense. And you know what *prevention* means. It means stopping it *before* it happens. In order to stop it, it is important to know how it starts. It's like a chain reaction: let's call it a reoffense chain. The Reoffense Chain on the next page shows how you can go from a Seemingly Unimportant Decision – let's call that a "SUD" – to an offense. It shows how a simple little act can get the whole thing started.

And now for an explanation of what these things mean.....

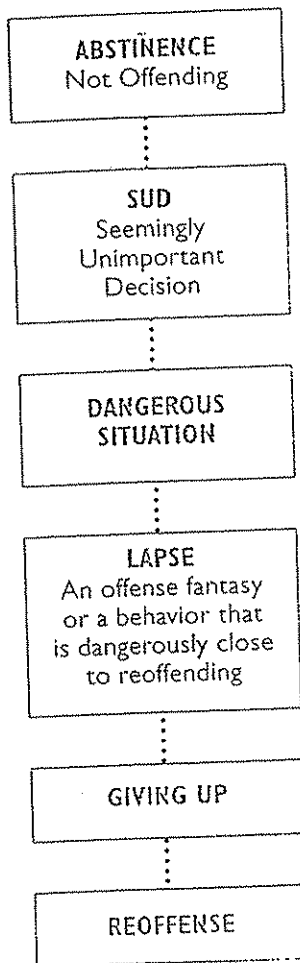
**Abstinence (Not Offending)** means what it says. You are not committing any offenses and you are not planning to commit any. This does not mean abstaining from *healthy* sexual behaviors.

SUDs (Seemingly Unimportant Decisions) are the everyday decisions you make that are reasonable-*looking*, but are risky because they have the possibility of placing you in a situation where you might offend. For example, let's consider the case of Bill. Bill had previously molested a child. He is home alone watching TV. A neighbor comes to the door. She is frantic. Her baby has cut off his finger in the door and she must take him to the hospital immediately. She asks Bill if he will watch her 5-year-old child while she goes.

On the surface, saying, "Yes, of course," sounds like a reasonable choice for Bill to make. But it isn't, because it places Bill in a high-risk and dangerous situation -- on the first rung toward reoffense. It doesn't mean Bill is going to reoffend, but reoffense is more possible.

**Dangerous Situation** is just what it says -- dangerous. It is dangerous because it places Bill in a situation where he has the opportunity to offend. The child is there alone with Bill. There is no one to stop Bill if he wants to offend. Again, it doesn't mean Bill is *going* to reoffend. However, he is much closer to reoffending because he is in a place where it is possible to offend.

### THE REOFFENSE CHAIN



Lapse is either 1) a *behavior* that brings you very close to a sex offense, or 2) a *fantasy or daydream of committing a sex offense*. For example, in Bill's situation, perhaps the child starts climbing on him. He sits the child down on his lap and places his hand on the child's thigh to keep him from wiggling around. The act of putting his hand on the child's thigh can be defined as a lapse. It isn't a sex offense, but it gets very close to one. Bill should not be touching a child's thigh even for non-sexual reasons. He is on the edge of committing a sexual offense. It is much easier to commit an offense when you are in such a risky situation.

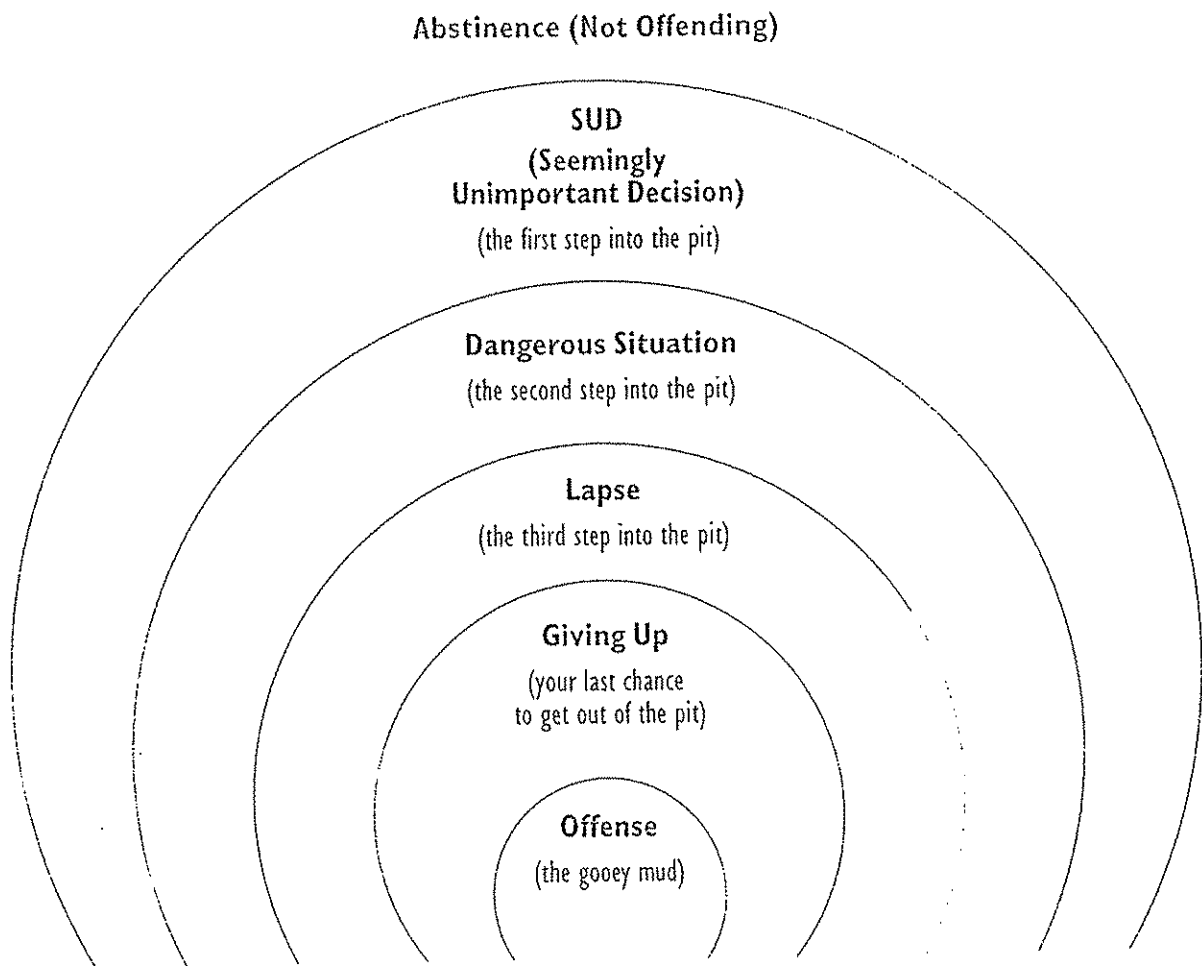
Another kind of lapse occurs just in your head. Perhaps a child is sitting next to you on the couch or climbing on you. You begin to daydream (fantasize) or get an uncomfortable feeling about touching the child's private parts. If you don't stop the fantasy, this is also called a lapse, because it places you that much closer to the forbidden sexual act. It makes it much harder to turn away. (Lapses are not bad acts in themselves, but are danger signals you need to do something about.)

**Giving Up** is where you figure you have already crossed the line, you have failed, and there is no turning back, so you may as well commit the sex offense. You're at the dangerous "Oh, what the hell! I may as well do it" point. When you get very close to reoffending, after a lapse like one of the two examples above, it is very easy to slip into the *Giving Up* stage.

This may be clearer to you if you think about some other *Giving Up* circumstance in your life. For example, maybe your mother has cooked a batch of fudge to give away as Christmas presents. You decide to sneak a piece. You tell yourself, "She'll never know." It tastes so good, you decide to take just one more. Then another. At this point you reach the *Giving Up* stage. It's the point where you feel there is no turning back. Obviously, she will notice some of the fudge has disappeared and will punish you, so you may as well eat the whole pan. In the case of sex offending, you tell yourself that you have gone too far to stop and give up trying.

**Offense** is molesting a child or raping someone.

Another way of looking at an offense chain is like a pit. In the bottom center is goocy mud (the offense) which you want to avoid. You get closer and closer to the muddy bottom as you fall deeper and deeper in from the sides (move from step to step, from the SUD inward to the Offense).



Let's look at what Bill could have done instead of committing the offense, how he could have changed his behavior at each step of the chain.

**SUD stage:** Bill could have said no to the neighbor: "I'm sorry, I can't watch your child, but I'll make some phone calls to find someone who can." But if he failed to do that and progressed to the *Dangerous Situation* stage, it wasn't too late. He still had options to get himself out of the situation.

**Dangerous Situation stage:** Bill could have called his parents, another neighbor or a friend and asked them to watch the child instead. But if he didn't do that and proceeded to the *Lapse* stage, he still could have avoided reoffending.

**Lapse stage:** At this point he could have immediately gotten up and left the room or premises, asked someone else to help, or even called the police to come get the child, if necessary. He could look at his reminder card for help with the coping strategies he learned in treatment. But if he failed again, he has one last chance at the *Giving Up* stage.

**Giving Up stage:** It is still not too late for Bill to stop. His best bet is to just get out of there, once he has made sure the child is safe. Touching the child's leg is not as serious as touching the child's private areas or molesting the child in some other way. If Bill got out of the house, he would never get to the *Offense* stage.

## EXERCISE 1. OFFENSE CHAIN

Now it is time for you to make your own offense chain. It is often hard to remember exactly what happened. If you have problems, just think back to your offense first. Think of what happened, how you felt, and what you did right before that all the way back as far back as you can remember. Figuring your offense chain out backwards usually makes it easier. Just write what happened step by step.

**Offense:** (what you did) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Giving Up:** (at what point did you figure you had already gone too far?) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Lapse:** (what did you do that was dangerously close to the act and/or when and how did you first fantasize about or get close to doing it?) Act(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fantasies** (daydreams about doing the sexual act) or feelings connected to doing the sexual act: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dangerous Situation:** (what was the dangerous situation or dynamic you were in that came before or led to the fantasies, feelings, or acts?) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SUD (Seemingly Unimportant Decision):** (what happened and what decisions did you make that seemed reasonable at the time, but put you in that position of danger?) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When you finish this exercise, look closely at it. Read each step, beginning with the SUD first, back through to your offense. Can you see how that very first choice made the offense possible? Did you notice that you could have gotten out of the dangerous situation immediately? And what could you have done when you either started fantasizing, had a feeling, or did some act that was very close to offending? Was it really too late to stop after that, or could you have avoided taking that final step and committing the sex offense?

These are the questions you will be exploring in a variety of ways as you move through this workbook. But first, let's see how you can change your own offense scenario.

## EXERCISE 2. ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOR CHAIN

Fill in what you could have done instead at each step of the *Offense Chain* that would have kept you from offending. We will call this the *Alternative Behavior Chain*. The alternatives are what you have to remember in the future.

**SUD Alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dangerous Situation Alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Lapse Alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Giving Up Alternative:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Result: No Offense.**

Now reread what you wrote. You will notice that your alternative behaviors fall into either of two important categories: *Avoidance* or *Escape*. If you can *avoid* getting into a dangerous situation in the first place, you have the best chance of not offending because the opportunity is not present. But even if you get into a place of danger, lapse, or are ready to give up, you can still break the chain and not reoffend by *escaping* from the situation. Leaving is usually the most fool-proof way of preventing reoffense. But there are also other ways. If your offense is child molestation, you should avoid being alone in the same room with a child, make sure others are there with you when a child is present, or if trapped in a situation where only you and a child are present, stay in another room or beyond arm's distance from any child.

*Avoidance* and *Escape* are the two most important words you will ever learn. Inscribe them permanently in your brain. Think of them every time you have to make a decision about where to go or what to do. Remember, if you can *avoid* being in a dangerous place, it is easiest not to offend. And if you find yourself at risk, *escape*. Get out of there fast. Get some protection for yourself.

I know you are saying to yourself, "That's silly. I don't have any desire to offend now. Why should I have to change my behavior by always having to avoid and escape?" Again, think of it as an insurance policy. If you are not in a situation of danger or leave a dangerous situation immediately, you are less likely to slip. Protect yourself by using these two simple words to think ahead and keep yourself safe: *avoid* and *escape*.

### EXERCISE 3. AVOIDANCE AND ESCAPE

This is an exercise to help you remember *Avoidance* and *Escape*. First, take the word *Avoidance* and think of as many words or phrases as you can that have the same meaning. Then take the word *Escape* and do the same. For example, another phrase for *Avoidance* may be "staying away from," and another word for *Escape* is "getting away." Feel free to ask your friends and family for help.

**Avoidance** can also be thought of as: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Escape** can also be thought of as: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

If you can't think of any other words or phrases which mean the same as *Avoidance* and *Escape*, go to your dictionary. Look up these words. The dictionary will give you some words and phrases you can use to complete this exercise, and might help you better understand what these words mean.

Remember to use *Escape* and *Avoidance* properly, however. Use them only to keep from getting into dangerous situations or trouble. Avoiding talking about your offense, avoiding therapy, avoiding feelings, or avoiding people in general will only help you get into more trouble in the future. Likewise, if you escape from your responsibilities or from dealing with your problems, you will only make things more difficult for yourself in the long run. Don't just apply these concepts or any others blindly. Use reason and common sense.

Just to make sure you understand when and when not to *Escape* or *Avoid*, complete the following short exercise.



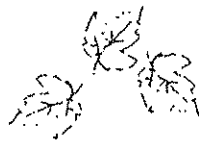
#### EXERCISE 4. USING AVOIDANCE AND ESCAPE PROPERLY

Write "yes" in front of each example where *Avoidance* or *Escape* is used properly and "no" before each example where it is misused.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ John previously molested his 5-year-old sister. He is working in a grocery store. A little girl tells him she needs to use the bathroom, and asks him to take her to it. John *avoids* being alone with the child by asking another clerk to show her to the bathroom.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Doreen previously molested a 5-year-old neighbor boy while babysitting. On the way back from school one afternoon, she cut through a deserted park. She decided to swing on one of the swings. A little boy she knew came up and sat in the swing next to her and asked to be pushed. Doreen said "no" and left, *escaping* the situation.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Albert was frustrated with some situations that happened at school, and found that he was thinking about exposing himself. When asked in group how he was doing, he said fine, *avoiding* thinking or talking about his exposure fantasies.
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ Robert's father yelled at him, because he hadn't taken the garbage out. Robert ran away to *escape* from his father's anger.
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ Carlos was with friends who wanted to have sex with a 16-year-old girl they considered a "slut." They talked about taking her into their garage and paying her to have sex with all of them. Carlos said "count me out" and left, *escaping* from the situation.
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ Tony had previously molested a young boy. His sister was babysitting a young child. His sister had an emergency and had to leave, dumping the child on Tony. Tony walked out, *escaping*, leaving the child all alone, and called someone else to watch the child..
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ Bill found himself peeking into the girls' washroom at school. He was very embarrassed about his behavior, but since he hadn't been caught he didn't tell anyone, thus *avoiding* further embarrassment or consequences.
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_ Maria was very unhappy. The last time she was unhappy, she had molested her foster sister. Maria decided to go to her own room, where nobody would see her unhappiness and bother her about it. (Was this *avoidance* or *escape*? Circle which one you think it is, then write yes or no in the blank.)
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_ Kamal refused to talk about his offense, saying he had put it behind him. (Was this *avoidance* or *escape*? Circle one.)
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_ Aaron was at a party. Everyone was getting loaded. There was a 14-year-old girl who had passed out on the bed in the bedroom. As Aaron was picking up his coat from the bed, he accidentally brushed her breast with his arm. It excited him. He ran out of the room. (Was this *avoidance* or *escape*? Circle one.)

If you are not sure about the answers to any of these, talk to your counselor or the other kids in group. These questions should help you remember when *Avoidance* and *Escape* are properly and improperly used.

For a final exercise on this subject, please fill in what would have been an appropriate *avoidance* or *escape* maneuver to prevent the risk of reoffense.



## EXERCISE 5. USING ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS

Complete the following scenarios by writing in an appropriate alternative escape or avoidance behavior that could break the offense chain.

1) Juan previously molested a child. One afternoon, when he is alone in the garage fixing his bike, a neighbor child comes into the garage and starts to talk to him. Juan should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Mark has exposed his penis to people before. A young woman comes to the door selling magazines. Mark invites her in. He fantasizes exposing himself in front of her. He unbuttons his pants and begins to pull down his zipper. He should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Jane is babysitting. She is changing a baby's diaper, when she has the urge to put her fingers in the little girl's vagina. She should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Ron and his girlfriend begin to make love. He is about to enter her when she says stop and tries to pull away from him. He should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) In the last scenario, Ron doesn't want to stop, and he believes his girlfriend doesn't want to either. He decides to continue despite her protests. She begins to cry. He should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) Philip has previously exposed himself to young children on a school playground. He is working as a deliveryman for a florist. He notices that the most direct route to his next delivery is right past a school. He is late. He should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) Dan has previously molested two little boys. He is over at Tim's house, playing Nintendo in Tim's room, when Tim's mother tells Tim he must come downstairs and take the garbage out. Tim's younger brother shares the room and is due home any minute. Dan should \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8) In the same scenario, Dan decides to finish his game. Tim's younger brother comes in the room before Dan finishes. Dan should \_\_\_\_\_

9) Next, Tim's younger brother asks Dan to help him with his homework. Dan sits on the brother's bed, next to him, and starts to help him. Dan begins to fantasize touching the brother's private parts. Dan should \_\_\_\_\_

10) Then, Dan places his hand on Tim's brother's leg. He begins to feel like a failure, because he has forgotten all the Relapse Prevention lessons he had learned in his treatment group. He figures Tim's brother will tell that he put his hand on the brother's leg, so, what the hell, why not touch his penis? At this point, Tim should \_\_\_\_\_

11) John is in a treatment program for sex offenders. His roommate says, "Hey, John. I've got an awful stiff neck. Would you rub it for me?" Both boys know that physical contact is against the rules. John begins to massage his roommate's neck and feels himself getting aroused. John should \_\_\_\_\_

Think of some situations in your own life where, if you don't use the appropriate *avoidance* and *escape* actions, you could be in a dangerous situation, lapse, give up, or reoffend. What *avoidance* and *escape* actions could you have taken at each step? Discuss this with your group or your therapist.

## SUMMARY

What could you have learned from this chapter? You now know:

- 1) What Relapse Prevention means
- 2) The steps in an Offense Chain (*S/D, Dangerous Situation, Lapse, Giving Up, Offense*)
- 3) The steps in your own behavioral chain
- 4) Alternative actions you could have taken to prevent offending
- 5) The importance and use of *avoidance* and *escape* to prevent reoffense or accusations

If you feel confused about any of these ideas, read the chapter over, talk to your treatment provider, or talk to your friends in group.

## CHAPTER TWO

## CHANGING THOUGHTS

Whether you move down the Offense Chain to reoffense or successfully avoid or escape offending is very much related to your thoughts. The way you think about things determines the way you feel about them, and the way you feel determines how you are likely to behave. For example, imagine that you are walking down the stairs at school. You feel a push on your shoulder from behind you. If you think that it is someone attacking you deliberately, you will probably feel angry, and you are likely to get back at the person in an aggressive way. But if you think that the person who pushed you did it by accident and didn't mean to, you probably won't feel bothered by it, and you won't take any action.

Another example: your father comes home and yells at you for not cleaning up the kitchen right. If you think to yourself, "I can't do anything right," you will feel bummed out possibly for the rest of the day, and probably either retreat to your room to mope or get angry at someone else. If, however, you say to yourself, "Dad must have had a tough day at work today. It's not me he's mad at. It must be someone or something at work," you won't feel as bad or take it as personally. Then you will probably stay out of your father's way until his mood improves, and go on with your usual activities.

A sexual abuse example: you have stayed late at school and hardly anyone is around. You think to yourself, "It can't hurt to just daydream about exposing my penis to a girl. Nobody would get hurt." You allow yourself to fantasize and feel sexually excited. If you then see a girl all alone in the hall, you are much more likely to expose yourself. On the other hand, if you say to yourself, "I need to think of something safer for me: fantasizing could get me in trouble again," and change your thoughts to plans for the basketball game coming up, you are less likely to get in trouble. You won't be sexually aroused and may not even notice the girl in the hall.

Thoughts are not engraved in stone. People change their ideas as they gain new information or views on an issue. When children are very little, they often have wild ideas about the way things work. For example, a young child may believe that there is a little person in the traffic light box who changes the color of the lights, or the child may believe a Tooth Fairy leaves money under her pillow in exchange for her baby teeth. As the child gains information about the world, he or she learns that the lights are controlled by electricity and that the "Tooth Fairy" is really Mom or Dad.

You too can change your thoughts, not just automatically when you gain new knowledge, but deliberately. You can tell yourself that your thinking is harmful, and change the way you see or think about a particular incident. For instance, in the very first example, where you are pushed, you might initially think that the push was deliberate. But you can tell yourself, "That's silly. Nobody has any reason to push me. It must have been an accident."

Self-talk is all the things people say to themselves to interpret the world, what is happening around them, and why they think it is happening. Self-talk can be negative or positive. You can change negative self-talk (that leads you closer to offending behavior, even by just making

you feel bad about yourself) into positive self-talk (that makes you less likely to offend by reinforcing your competence and ability to control your own behavior) by changing your thoughts. When your self-talk is more positive, like saying to yourself, "It must have been an accident," your mood will usually change with it. You will probably go from feeling angry to not being bothered or concerned, and you will be less likely to act out your first angry feelings.

Sometimes people act *before* they think or feel or before they are *aware* of their feelings or thoughts. If you are one of these impulsive people, you need to slow your reactions down. Tell yourself that you won't react to anything until you have had time to think it over. Ahead of time, think about ways to slow down, like taking five deep breaths before you respond to anything, or reading over a card you carry with you reminding you to slow down.

In the following exercise, see how you can change your thinking from thoughts that would make you mad or sad to self-talk that will change your mood. What would you tell yourself instead?

### EXERCISE 6. CHANGING SELF-TALK

1) Barry's brother tells him he is stupid. At first, Barry believes him and feels worthless. What can Barry tell himself to feel better?

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2) Mario likes a girl in his class. He goes up to her and asks her if she'd like to go to the dance with him. She says she is busy. At first he doesn't believe her and thinks to himself that she must think he is a real nerd. He feels totally bummed out. How can Mario change his self-talk so that he will feel better?

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3) Danny does the best job he can on a school project, but the teacher gives him a "D." Danny thinks, "I must be stupid," and feels depressed. What could he say to himself that would make him feel better?

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4) Gloria auditions for jazz choir. The teacher doesn't pick her. She thinks to herself, "I must not be able to sing." Since singing has been her career goal, she feels destroyed. What could she tell herself that would make her feel better?

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5) Several of the guys Joe likes make fun of him in class. Joe thinks they must not like him, and he feels sad. What could he say to himself that might make him feel better?

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6) Rick is ordered to participate in group therapy as a condition of probation. He thinks, "Only crazy people go to psychologists. I'm not crazy, so I won't go." He doesn't go, and gets put in Juvenile Hall. What should he have told himself instead that might have prevented this outcome? \_\_\_\_\_

7) Franco gets nervous and can't seem to get any words out when a girl he likes talks to him. He thinks, "I'm hopeless. I'll never have a girlfriend." He feels awful. What could he say to himself that would make him feel better? \_\_\_\_\_

8) Joey's father criticizes everything he does. Joey thinks it is hopeless to try to please his father, so he stops trying. How could Joey change his self-talk so that he would feel better and not give up? \_\_\_\_\_

9) Lisa is bummed out because she thinks the only reason her boyfriend likes her is for sex. What can she say to herself that can make her feel better about herself and not feel obligated to have sex with him? \_\_\_\_\_

10) Some bullies at school steal Julio's lunch and threaten to beat him up. Julio feels powerless. He thinks the only way he can be powerful is to join a gang. How can he change his thinking so that he feels stronger without having to join a gang? \_\_\_\_\_

11) Ruth is in a residential program for sex offenders. She is sure that everyone thinks she's a pervert. What can she say to herself so she can feel better? \_\_\_\_\_

Every time we do something, it is usually triggered by some event that starts a kind of chain reaction. Included in this chain reaction are thoughts, self-talk, feelings, and finally, actions. For example, if a teacher gives you a hard time, you say to yourself, "She's picking on me. It's not fair. She lets other kids get away with worse." This self-talk makes you feel angry and resentful. If you feel angry, you are more likely to yell at or punch some other person who gets in your way.

In the next exercise, pick a situation where everything turned out horribly, where you said or did something you were sorry about later. First, trace back your self-talk, your feelings, and the behaviors that resulted, and write them on the left side of the page. Then go back and change your negative thoughts, and determine what your feelings and actions could have been as a result on the right hand side of the page.

## EXERCISE 7. CHANGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

- 1) Think of a time in your life where you got mad or upset and said or did something you wish you hadn't. What happened that started the chain? (What triggered the unhappy result?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What did you say to yourself? (What thoughts did you have?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How did you feel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What did you do (that turned out badly)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What could you have said to yourself instead? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) How do you think you would have felt if you had changed your thoughts to those above instead? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7) What do you think you would have done instead if you felt differently? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the last chapter, we talked about *Offense Chains*. At each step of the *offense chain*, the offender chose behaviors that brought him or her closer and closer to the offending act. By choosing and using *avoidance* and *escape* techniques instead, an offender could prevent him- or herself from reoffending. You learned that the earlier in the chain the person avoided or escaped, the less likely he or she would commit the offense. Remember that it is never too late to change behaviors until the offense has been committed.

Self-talk plays a part in the offense chain and in changing behaviors. Depending on what you say to yourself, you are more or less likely to move down the offense chain or deeper into the pit. For example, if a boy who molested a young child says to himself, "I can be alone with children. I'll never molest again," he is more likely to place himself in a dangerous situation than someone who says to himself, "I don't want to take any risks. I don't even want anyone to *think* I might be sexually interested in a child."

Now let's look at how self-talk affected the scenario we discussed in the first chapter. Before choosing to babysit for the desperate mother, Bill probably said to himself, "This poor mother needs me. I can't say 'no.' It couldn't hurt to help her." On the surface, this sounds like a *Seemingly Unimportant Decision*.

Once in the *Dangerous Situation* – being alone with the child – Bill probably said to himself, "I'm not in any danger. I won't do anything wrong. The mother will be back soon, anyhow."

When he reached the *Lapse* stage, he told himself, "It's okay to fantasize about a sexual activity with this child as long as I don't do anything," or, "Touching this child, even accidentally, sure felt nice."

Then, he probably *Gave Up*, saying to himself, "I'm a failure already. I may as well go ahead with the offense," or, "I'll just touch him one time. No one will ever know." And then came the full *Offense*.

Instead, if Bill had changed his self-talk to self-protective escape and avoidance types of statements, he probably would not have offended. In the next exercise write what Bill's alternative self-talk could have been: what he could have thought or said to himself that would have kept him from moving down the offense chain.

### EXERCISE 8. ALTERNATIVE THOUGHTS DOWN THE OFFENSE CHAIN

Based on Bill's story in Chapter One, fill in the blanks with self-talk which, if he acted accordingly, would have stopped him from committing the sex offense.

**SUD** (when the mother asked him to babysit): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dangerous Situation** (once he was alone with the child): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Lapse** (when he fantasized touching the child): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(when he touched the child's leg): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Giving Up** (when he felt lost, like it was too late to quit): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now look back at your own offense chain. You probably said things to yourself or felt things that were a lot like the thoughts and feelings in Bill's scenario, even though you may not have been consciously aware at the time of what you were thinking and feeling. In the next exercise, you will reconstruct your original thoughts and feelings, then write what you should have thought or said to yourself instead. The purpose of this is to make certain that if you are ever in similar circumstances again, you won't go down that same chain toward offending. Your new, improved model of thinking will prevent it. Had you been able to change your thinking prior to your offense, the whole course of your history might have been different.



## EXERCISE 9. CHANGING YOUR OWN THOUGHTS (SELF-TALK)

At each step of your own *Offense Chain*, write down what probably went through your mind to put you in the situation, then write what you could have thought and said to yourself instead which would have kept you from moving down the chain.

**Seemingly Unimportant Decision (SUD):** The choice you made: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you probably thought or felt at the time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you could have changed your thoughts to instead: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dangerous Situation:** The dangerous situation you got yourself into: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you probably thought or felt at the time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you could have changed your thoughts to instead: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Lapse:** What you probably thought or felt at the time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you could have changed your thoughts to instead: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Giving Up:** What you probably thought or felt at the time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What you should have changed your thoughts to instead: \_\_\_\_\_

Now let's put the whole chain together with what you must have thought or felt and did and what alternative thoughts and behaviors would have kept you out of trouble at each step of the chain. You can do this chain either with the offense that got you here, or with some other offense or bad behavior you have committed in the past. Ask your group leader which would be the best way for you to do this exercise and/or try it each way.

## EXERCISE 10. BEHAVIOR AND THOUGHT CHAIN AS IT WAS AND MODIFIED

On the solid lines below, write the negative steps you took both in acts and self-talk. On the dash lines write the good alternative behaviors and thoughts you might have said and done that would have kept you out of trouble. (If you don't understand this exercise, or have difficulty with it, ask your therapist or counselor for help. It is a hard one!)

### THOUGHTS (SELF TALK)

### BEHAVIORS

SUD STAGE: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Alternatives .....

.....

.....

.....

DANGEROUS SITUATION: .....

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Alternatives .....

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LAPSE: .....

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Alternatives .....

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GIVING UP: .....

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Alternatives .....

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.....

.....

OFFENSE: .....

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.....

NO OFFENSE:

Read your finished exercise over carefully. Really think about each step and how you could have behaved differently and thought differently so that you wouldn't have committed the offense. Apply this changed thinking and behavior to situations that could happen to you in the future. An offense-free life requires thinking before you act, and figuring out possible results of your actions and thoughts in advance.

### SUMMARY

These are the major things you had the opportunity to learn from this chapter:

- 1) The relationship between thoughts or feelings and behavior
- 2) How you can change your thoughts (self-talk) for a more positive outcome
- 3) How to change negative thoughts down the *Offense Chain* to prevent offending
- 4) How thoughts and behavior fit together in the *Offense Chain*
- 5) The importance of thinking ahead to possible consequences

NOTES
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## CHAPTER THREE

## STINKING THINKING

In this chapter we are going to look a little further at how negative, wrong, or distorted thinking, sometimes called "stinking thinking," can cause problems that may lead you down into the reoffense pit. You will learn different ways people use *stinking thinking*, what it can do, and how to change it so that you can step out of the Offense Chain. There are three types of stinking thinking we will discuss: *roadblocks*, *thinking distortions*, and *thinking errors*.

**Roadblocks** are obstacles you set up for yourself. When you use the words and phrases we will be looking at below, you are setting up roadblocks that prevent you from making positive changes. When you use these negative self-talk roadblocks, you will get stuck. For example, if you say, "I can't," you are deciding not to change or do things you may want to do. "I can't" usually means "I won't."

The same principles of changing thoughts or self-talk that you learned about in the last chapter can be applied to how you see your life and how you can make the changes you need to make. If you talk to yourself (and express yourself to others, too) in a positive way, you open all kinds of doors to new and better experiences.

Read over the following examples of negative and positive self-talk. See how the negative self-talk limits your options, while the positive alternatives give you power to change things. Then complete the "Eliminating Roadblocks" exercise that follows.

## NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

## POSITIVE SELF-TALK ALTERNATIVES

"I can't"

"I can't means I won't, but even though it may be difficult, I'll find a way if I want to badly enough."

"I have to"

"I want to" or "I choose to."

"I should"

"I may if I want to."

"I should have"

"I made a mistake, but it's not the end of the world. I can learn from it so I won't make the same mistake again."

"Yeah, but"

"I'll think about it."

"I didn't have a choice"

"I do have a choice. I just have to look at the costs and benefits of my choices."

"You're stopping me from . . ."

"The only one stopping me from doing what I want or need to do is myself. And if there are reasons why I can't do something, I've either got to find some other ways of going about it, or make some other choices."

It is important to recognize that none of these statements is absolute. Sometimes a person is physically unable to do something (like asking someone with a broken leg to play football) or is stopped from it or doesn't have a choice. But all too often we overuse these negative thoughts to hinder our progress. When you switch positive thoughts for your negative ones, you will feel more capable and actually will accomplish more. In addition, you will feel better about yourself and your life.

### EXERCISE 11. ELIMINATING ROADBLOCKS

List three negative statements you have made (using the ones listed above or others) and the situations in which you made them. Then substitute three positive statements you could have made instead.

Negative statement and situation	Positive alternative statement
1) _____ _____	1a) _____ _____
2) _____ _____	2a) _____ _____
3) _____ _____	3a) _____ _____

There are other ways that our thinking may be twisted and can interfere with choosing a positive lifestyle. We call these **Thinking Distortions**. Some of the most common *Thinking Distortions* are:

1) **All or Nothing Thinking:** This is where you see everything as all good or all bad. It is often called "seeing things in black or white." Nothing in life is perfectly good or perfectly evil. Everything is a shade of gray. While you try to be the best person you can, you will never be perfect. If you expect absolute perfection of yourself, you will always be disappointed or consider yourself a failure. On the other hand, even if you do something awful, that doesn't make you a terrible person. You can learn from your mistakes and be an even better person in the future.

2) **Jumping to Conclusions:** In this kind of stinking thinking, you assume a negative result even though it hasn't yet happened and may not. This is called a negative expectation. You decide before all the evidence is in. An example is when you assume someone is thinking something bad about you, even though nothing like that was said! Another example is when you expect things to go badly and don't allow for the possibility of a different outcome.

Perhaps someone is rude to you. You might jump to the conclusion that this person doesn't like you. It could be that the person is having a bad day or something else bad happened to that person that has nothing to do with you, and the person is so engrossed in bad feelings that he or she doesn't even think about you or being nice to you.

An example of *negative expectation* is where you expect that you won't have any fun at a school dance because your friends aren't going, so you don't go. You may have had fun there without them. You don't know until you try.

3) **Overgeneralizing:** This is where you think that because something bad happens once, it will always happen. For example, if someone you like turns you down once for a date, you conclude that he or she doesn't like you, or, worse yet, that no one you're interested in dating will like you. It may just be that the person is busy, or is involved with someone else. Maybe others will want to go on a date with you even if this person doesn't.

4) **Overemphasizing One Detail:** This is similar to *Overgeneralizing*, picking out one negative happening. In this case, however, you dwell on the one bad detail and ignore all the other good aspects. For example, if someone you like makes a joke about your nose, you consider your total looks a disaster, ignoring the fact that your friend likes your personality, compliments the way you dress, and thinks you're smart.

5) **Rejecting the Positive:** This is where you disqualify any positive features or happenings, insisting they don't count, so you can hold on to your negative beliefs. For example, someone tells you how nice your haircut is. You reject this positive statement, instead thinking to yourself that you are really a mess. The nice haircut doesn't count.

6) **Catastrophizing:** Similar to *Overemphasizing One Detail*, this is where you assume that *everything* bad is going to happen because one thing goes bad. For example, if you get a bad grade on one test, you assume you won't be able to pass the class and you'll flunk out of school and never get a job. Then you don't try. In reality, it may have been that the first test was a particularly hard one.

7) **Personalizing:** In this kind of *stinking thinking*, you blame yourself for things you have no control over, or assume there is something wrong with you if you receive negative treatment of some kind. For example, a bully might come up to you and call you a wimp or a bitch. You assume you must be a wimp or a bitch, rather than recognizing that the bully might have problems of his or her own and needs to call people negative names to build himself or herself up. Or, your parents may be fighting, and you assume it must be because you have misbehaved. In reality, they may be having marital problems that have nothing to do with what you did. They may be arguing about you as a way of taking out their anger toward each other.

8) **Calling Yourself Names:** In this type of *Thinking Distortion*, you attach a negative label to yourself rather than describe a negative behavior, error, or happening. For example, you might call yourself a "dumbbell" because you don't understand what is being taught in math, rather than just describing yourself as having some problems with the work. Or you might call yourself a "pervert," because you did a sexual offense you were ashamed of, rather than recognizing you committed a bad, hurtful act but most of the time are a good person. Can you see how labeling yourself can get in the way of doing something positive about an area where you have problems?

(You should be careful, however, not to deny or minimize the harm you did to your victim just because you are basically a good person. Good people acknowledge their wrongs and use their best efforts not to repeat them.)

There are special kinds of distorted thinking common to most sex offenders. These include: *misinterpreting what their victim is thinking*, such as believing the person is asking for sex when the person really isn't and doesn't want it; *excusing their sexual offenses*, such as telling themselves and others, "My father molested me, so it is okay for me to molest my sister"; *minimizing*

the harm they've done, thinking, "It didn't bother me when it happened to me, so it won't bother my victim," or "He'll get over it. It was no big thing"; or *denying responsibility*, including saying, "He came to me; I didn't start it," or "I only did it because everyone else did. They started it. I didn't have any choice."

You can correct your **Thinking Distortions** just as you changed your self-talk in the *Roadblocks* above. In the next exercise, you will have the opportunity to correct your *Thinking Distortions* in a variety of situations. Have you ever committed any of these *Thinking Distortions* yourself? If you answered no, look again. We all fall into these traps sometimes.

## EXERCISE 12. CORRECTING THINKING DISTORTIONS

For each of the following examples of *Thinking Distortions*, write what the person could have said to him/herself instead that would have been more positive.

1) **All or Nothing Thinking:** Richie and Chris have been going together. Chris is bright and well-liked, but Richie finds out that Chris had a bad reputation at a prior school. Even though he really likes Chris, he thinks, "I'm going to dump Chris, because Chris isn't the perfect person I thought." What would be a better way for Richie to think about this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) **Jumping to Conclusions:** Richie stays with Chris. One day he sees Chris in the hall with an arm around another person. He immediately assumes Chris has been lying to him about their relationship. What could he say to himself instead that might help him deal with this problem? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) **Overgeneralizing:** Terry tried out for the basketball team and didn't make it. Terry thought, "I'm no good at sports." What could Terry have said instead? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) **Overemphasizing One Detail:** Gloria is a warm, friendly person with dark, wavy hair and beautiful brown eyes. Gloria's father teased her about being fat. Because of that, she says to herself, "I'm ugly." What could Gloria have told herself instead? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) **Rejecting the Positive:** Jimmy feels very ugly because he is 30 pounds overweight. His friend tells him that he is good-looking and attractive. He says to himself, "So what? People think I'm ugly because I'm fat." How could he change his self-talk? What could he say instead? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) **Catastrophizing:** Rico loses his job. He thinks, "I'll never get a job again." What could he say to himself instead? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) **Personalizing:** When Rico's boss told him he was fired, Rico thought, "He thinks I'm no good." What are some other things Rico could have said to himself that would have been less self-destructive? \_\_\_\_\_

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8) **Calling Yourself Names:** After Rico lost his job, he said to himself, "I'm a loser." \_\_\_\_\_

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What could he have said instead? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you see how much better you will feel about yourself and/or how much better you will do if you reframe your thinking and don't fall into *Thinking Distortion* traps?

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Thoughts are very complicated. We have seen how our thoughts affect our feelings and our behavior, and how we have the power to change them so that we feel better or behave in a more positive way.

How we take in information from around us is also a part of our thinking. We all perceive (take in) experiences differently, depending on what experiences we have had in the past. Since everyone has had different experiences, everyone perceives things differently. Sometimes we *think* we know what another person is thinking or feeling when we really don't. We only know what *we* might think, feel, or need in that situation. Often we make up okay-sounding reasons for behavior we know is wrong. This is called *rationalizing*. Rationalizing is one kind of *Thinking Error*. *Thinking Errors* and *cognitive distortions* mean the same thing.

When you committed your sexual offense, you made various types of *Thinking Errors*. You probably twisted around your thinking to make your negative behavior seem okay. For example, you may have touched a young child's private parts while wrestling. The child may not have said anything, so you thought to yourself, "She probably likes it and wants more," or "This won't hurt him," and you deliberately touched the child a second time. Or, you got a brief glimpse of an adult undressing through the window of a nearby house and thought to yourself, "If I sneak into the yard, maybe I can see the person in the nude. No one will notice me, because it's pretty dark out now. Since nobody will see me, I'm not doing anything wrong." These are *Thinking Errors*. Your thoughts weren't based on real facts. They led you into negative behaviors that invaded other people's privacy, and could result in reoffense and criminal charges.

How can you know if you are thinking correctly? One way is to stop and ask yourself some of following questions:

- 1) Is this something someone might find hurtful, embarrassing, or unpleasant?
- 2) Is this something I would feel uncomfortable telling my parents, teachers, counselors and friends about?
- 3) Is this something I wouldn't like someone to do to me if I were their age or in their situation?
- 4) Am I breaking any laws or rules by doing this?



5) Would there be negative consequences (would something bad happen to me) if I were caught doing this?

6) Would I feel kind of crummy about myself afterward if I did this?

If you answer "no" to all of the questions, your thinking is probably correct. If your answer is "yes" to *any* of them, however, you are probably engaging in thinking errors.

You can also check out your thinking by talking to parents, counselors, teachers and friends. Listen to what they have to say about the activity. If they all agree, and you do too, your thinking is probably correct. If they all agree, but you don't, your thinking is probably distorted. If one of the groups approves, but the rest don't, could that one group be wrong? Have these people gotten into trouble, or could they, for doing some of these things? If one of the groups disapproves, but all the others approve, could the disapproving group be out of line? They may have a different value system. Think about your own values. You probably know down underneath what is basically right and what is basically wrong.

We'll talk more about errors in judging what others are thinking, feeling, or experiencing in the chapter on Empathy later in this book. But the short exercise that follows will give you the opportunity to correct some common types of *Thinking Errors*. In the spaces, write what the true situation is more likely to be.

### EXERCISE 13. CHANGING THINKING ERRORS

1) Albert goes into a neighbor's yard and peeps through a window to watch the neighbor dressing. He tells himself he isn't doing anything wrong and that he won't get caught. What would be more correct thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Gloria tells herself she is just teaching her 10-year-old cousin about sex when she asks him to rub her breasts. What would be more correct thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) Kerry thinks it would be fun to "pants" (take down the pants of) a kindergartner at school. Kerry doesn't think this would do any harm. Correct Kerry's thinking. \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Julio rubs up against girls on the bus. He thinks this is okay behavior because he thinks the girls like it. Correct his thinking. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) Andy figures that if he threatens his little brother, his little brother won't tell anyone that Andy molested him. How should Andy change his thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

6) Pat and a group of friends decide to rape someone as an initiation to a gang. Pat thinks, "This person is lucky to be chosen." Correct Pat's thinking. \_\_\_\_\_

7) Dwayne exposes himself to a 6-year-old boy at school. He says to himself, "Nudity is good. Our society is too uptight. I'm really doing a good thing for this child." Correct his thinking error. \_\_\_\_\_

8) Before she molests her little sister, Andrea says to herself, "My father did this to me, and he loved me, so why shouldn't I do the same thing to my little sister." Correct her thinking \_\_\_\_\_

9) What was one of your thinking errors at the time you committed your offense? (If you don't remember any, just figure out what one must have been.) \_\_\_\_\_

10) Correct your own thinking in question 9. \_\_\_\_\_

So we all have some negative thoughts and need to change them. How can we do that? First, you need to recognize negative, wrong, or distorted thoughts, or, what we've called *stinking thinking*. The exercises you have already done in this workbook should help you be aware of them. Be sure you review this chapter every couple of weeks to remind yourself of the pitfalls.

If and when you fall into negative, wrong, or distorted thinking, however, there are a variety of techniques you can use to help you change your thinking. They include:

1) **Thought Stopping:** *Thought Stopping* is exactly what it says . . . just stopping the improper thoughts. But how can you do that? There are several ways:

- A) Tell yourself to stop, or yell "stop" to yourself in your head or out loud, to throw the negative thoughts out of your mind.
- B) Remind yourself of some of the awful consequences of your wrong thoughts if you act on them. For example, if you are thinking to yourself that your younger brother would probably enjoy having you touch his penis (which is a *Thinking Error*), you instead focus on what it will be like when the police come and take you away after he tells, or what it will be like when the police come to school to arrest you. You might also add to it the image of you escaping from the situation before you do anything wrong and feeling proud of yourself.
- C) Use some type of outside stimuli to stop your thoughts, such as rubber bands or other measures advised by your therapist. Wearing a thick rubber band on your wrist and snapping it when you catch yourself in negative thinking, or carrying a jar of putrid smelling stuff (as recommended by your therapist) and taking a whiff can drive the negative thoughts away fast. (Talk to your therapist first, however, to determine whether any of these techniques are appropriate for you.)

2) **Thought Switching:** Once you have jarred yourself out of the negative thoughts, you have the power to change them to more appropriate ones. With the help of your therapist, you might even plan some *appropriate* fantasies or scenarios for yourself in advance. Write them down on a card and read them to yourself.

Another form of *Thought Switching* is to think of something entirely different, for example, something totally unrelated to sex offending like a history assignment or a new play in basketball. Or switch to the terrible consequences of offending rather than the pleasurable part.

3) **Get Help:** If you are still having trouble with thoughts that are dangerous or depressing, talk to someone you trust. Tell a good friend or family member. Call your therapist. Discuss the situation. Talking things out always helps.

4) **Record What You Are Thinking:** Often the people you can talk to about these issues aren't around when you need them, so keep pen and paper or a tape recorder handy and record what's going through your head. Then you can discuss what went through your mind later in therapy.

If you learn about any other techniques to change your thinking, write them here so you won't forget them: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SUMMARY

These are the major things you could have learned from this chapter:

- 1) Three types of *Stinking Thinking* that need to be changed
- 2) What your *Roadblocks* to productive activity and change are and how to correct them
- 3) Common *Thinking Distortions* and how to correct them
- 4) *Thinking Errors* relative to offenses and how to correct them
- 5) Techniques to help you *change* your thinking

## CHAPTER FOUR

# EMOTIONS

Just as what you are thinking affects how you feel and behave, your emotions (the way you feel) affect what you are thinking and what you do. When you are feeling depressed, ineffective, powerless, and angry, you are more likely to employ distorted or wrong thinking and to behave in a way that is destructive or dangerous to yourself or others.

Many people who have done sexual offenses are out of touch with what they are feeling. They have closed off their emotions because of childhood abuses and problems. They act out their feelings instead of allowing themselves to experience the feelings – like hitting someone instead of just feeling anger. If they cannot feel their own emotions, they certainly cannot feel what their victims might be experiencing. For these reasons, we will spend a lot of pages in this workbook on your emotions, emotional needs, and awareness of the feelings of others.

First, it is important to develop a vocabulary of feelings. The following is a list of some of the words we use to describe our emotions:

### FEELING WORDS

afraid	detached	good	independent	pessimistic	silly
aggravated	determined	goofy	indifferent	playful	smothered
aloof	dirty	grateful	insecure	pleased	sorry
amused	disgusted	guilty	irritated	powerful	stupid
angry	down	happy	isolated	put-out	tearful
anxious	dumb	hateful	jealous	regretful	thankful
ashamed	ecstatic	helpless	joyful	relieved	threatened
bashful	embarrassed	hopeful	lonely	resentful	tough
bored	energetic	hopeless	loving	responsible	troubled
cautious	excited	hostile	mad	ridiculous	unhappy
cheerful	exhausted	humiliated	nervous	rotten	unique
cold	fearful	hungry	optimistic	sad	uptight
content	flippant	hurt	overwhelmed	satisfied	vengeful
courageous	frantic	hyper	panicked	selfish	whipped
curious	friendly	hysterical	paranoid	sexy	wicked
defiant	frightened	inadequate	peppy	shaky	worried
depressed	frustrated	impatient	perplexed	shy	wounded

Read over the feeling words listed. Think about what they mean. (If you don't know the meaning of a word, look it up in the dictionary). Can you think of a time in your life when you felt the way each word describes? In your treatment group, write the words on separate cards or pieces of paper. Play charades with them, acting them out for others to guess. Think of other feeling words that aren't on the list.

The following three exercises will increase your understanding and use of feeling words.

## EXERCISE 14. USING FEELING WORDS

- 1) Write a short story or poem using 12 of the feeling words from the list above (use extra paper if you need it):

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

- 2) On separate sheets of blank paper draw a picture or design that expresses each of the following feeling words:

rage      sorrow      joy      nervousness      power      weakness

\_\_\_\_\_

### EXERCISE 15. FEELINGS SENTENCE COMPLETION

1) Complete the following sentences, describing the situation when you have felt the feeling listed:

- a) I felt great when \_\_\_\_\_
- b) I worry that \_\_\_\_\_
- c) I am most angry that \_\_\_\_\_
- d) I feel loneliest when \_\_\_\_\_
- e) I felt appreciated when \_\_\_\_\_
- f) I felt abandoned when \_\_\_\_\_
- g) I felt inadequate when \_\_\_\_\_
- h) I am calmest when \_\_\_\_\_
- i) I am frustrated with \_\_\_\_\_
- j) I felt excited when \_\_\_\_\_
- k) I feel bitter towards \_\_\_\_\_

2) Now do the same type of exercise the other way around. This time describe the feeling *after* the situation. Complete the following sentences, using different feeling words for each.

- a) When someone is *rude* to me, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- b) When someone is *kind* to me, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- c) If I were given a *surprise party*, I would feel \_\_\_\_\_
- d) When I say something *stupid*, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- e) If someone held a *gun* to my head I would feel \_\_\_\_\_
- f) When all my friends are *out of town*, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- g) When I *can't* do something I am *trying* to do, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- h) Just before test *grades* are given out, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- i) When I talk to someone I *really like*, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- j) When I'm *criticized*, I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- k) When I win at a sport, I feel \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 16. RECORDING EMOTIONS

Record what you are feeling at the following times of the day for three days.

a) First thing in the morning when you are awakened:

Day #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #3 \_\_\_\_\_

b) During lunchtime:

Day #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #3 \_\_\_\_\_

c) Mid-afternoon before school is out:

Day #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #3 \_\_\_\_\_

d) Right after school:

Day #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #3 \_\_\_\_\_

e) Just before you go to bed:

Day #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Day #3 \_\_\_\_\_

The exercises above were designed to help you begin to think about your feelings and develop a vocabulary to express those emotions. Did you have difficulty with the last part? Or find yourself writing "Okay" or "the same" on each of the lines? While your emotions at these different times may not have been very different or extreme, there may have been events that triggered stronger emotions that you were not conscious of feeling.

One way of determining how you feel is to check in with your body. Your body will give you clues as to what emotion you are feeling, if you pay attention. For example, if you are angry:

- 1) Does your face get red or feel hot?
- 2) Do your muscles tense up?
- 3) Does your breathing change?
- 4) Do you feel sick?

- 5) Does your voice go up in pitch?
- 6) Does your head pound?
- 7) Do you feel more energetic or powerful?
- 8) Does your posture change? How?

You probably will experience some, but not all, of these physical signs of anger. Be aware of which ones apply to you. Then, for example, if you find your muscles tensing, voice going up, and energy pulsing, you can clue yourself in that you are probably feeling angry.

When you are depressed, you are likely to slump, cross your arms over your chest to keep people out, speak more softly or mumble, and/or frown. When you are anxious or nervous, you are likely to fidget and tap, move around a lot, feel racy inside, your voice may get quavery, and you may have difficulty sleeping. Every time your body language changes, check in on what emotions you may be feeling, and every time you are aware of your emotions, check in on how your body is reacting. Especially for people who tend to impulsively act out their emotions, this is a way of slowing down and taking more well-thought-out actions.

Although anger, frustration, and other painful emotions play a part in your sexual offending, there are no "bad" emotions. All feelings are normal and okay. It is what you *do* with the emotions that is important. If you are aware of your emotions and appropriately express them, you are less likely to reoffend.

How have you handled your emotions in the past? In the next exercise, you will look at the various ways you may have expressed several different emotions. Did your parents handle feelings in the same way? How did you feel when they handled their feelings toward you in that way?

### EXERCISE 17. EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

#### 1) Anger:

a) How many of the following ways have you expressed or handled your anger? Put a check mark next to the ones that apply.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) Yelled or screamed<br><input type="checkbox"/> 2) Hit someone<br><input type="checkbox"/> 3) Hit something<br><input type="checkbox"/> 4) Broke something<br><input type="checkbox"/> 5) Cried<br><input type="checkbox"/> 6) Ran away<br><input type="checkbox"/> 7) Just held it in<br><input type="checkbox"/> 8) Wrote out your feelings<br><input type="checkbox"/> 9) Drank or used drugs<br><input type="checkbox"/> 10) Gave the silent treatment<br><input type="checkbox"/> 11) Said something nasty<br><input type="checkbox"/> 12) Took out your feelings on someone other than who you were mad at<br><input type="checkbox"/> 13) Said something to hurt someone back | <input type="checkbox"/> 14) Ran or did other physical exercise<br><input type="checkbox"/> 15) Swore<br><input type="checkbox"/> 16) Said something sarcastic<br><input type="checkbox"/> 17) Did something creative (art, woodwork or?)<br><input type="checkbox"/> 18) Had revenge<br><input type="checkbox"/> 19) Took a time out<br><input type="checkbox"/> 20) Talked out your feelings calmly at the time<br><input type="checkbox"/> 21) Talked out your feelings calmly a little later<br><input type="checkbox"/> 22) Committed a sex offense<br><input type="checkbox"/> 23) Changed your thinking about the situation<br><input type="checkbox"/> 24) Took out your feelings on yourself:<br>cut yourself _____<br>attempted suicide _____<br>other _____ |
|---|--|



Any other ways? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Which of these ways of expressing anger are most healthy or productive for you? Circle the numbers. Why do you think they are healthy or work best? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Look at your most unhealthy responses. Why are they unproductive ways of expressing anger? \_\_\_\_\_

d) Based on what you have learned in the last chapter about how changing your thoughts can affect how you feel about things, what could you say to yourself that might make you feel less angry? \_\_\_\_\_

2) **Depression** (feeling down or blue): \_\_\_\_\_

a) How many of the following ways have you expressed or handled your depression? (Check the ones you've used.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| _____ 1) Cried                               | _____ 12) Did something creative  |
| _____ 2) Read                                | _____ 13) Hit something   |
| _____ 3) Drank                               | _____ 14) Took your feelings out on someone else<br>(including sex offending) |
| _____ 4) Hurt yourself                       | _____ 15) Watched TV  |
| _____ 5) Used drugs                          | _____ 16) Slept   |
| _____ 6) Ate                                 | _____ 17) Had sex   |
| _____ 7) Attempted suicide How? _____        | _____ 18) Beat someone up   |
| _____ 8) Got angry                           | _____ 19) Talked to a friend  |
| _____ 9) Withdrew (stayed alone)             | _____ 20) Moaned  |
| _____ 10) Wrote out your feelings            | _____ 21) Other ways? _____   |
| _____ 11) Ran or did other physical exercise |   |

b) Circle the ways you expressed depression in a positive way. Why are these healthy? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Now look at your most destructive (unhealthy) ways. Why are they harmful? \_\_\_\_\_

d) What could you say to yourself to help you feel less depressed? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3) Anxiety (worry, nervousness, etc.):

a) How many of the following ways have you expressed or handled your anxiety? (Check the ones you've used)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) Dwelled on it (kept worrying) | <input type="checkbox"/> 10) Did something creative  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) Paced                         | <input type="checkbox"/> 11) Punched the wall  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) Yelled or screamed            | <input type="checkbox"/> 12) Struck someone  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4) Cried                         | <input type="checkbox"/> 13) Made lists of things to do  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5) Withdrew (stayed alone)       | <input type="checkbox"/> 14) Ran/physical exercise   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6) Ran away                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 15) Talked about your feelings with someone who would understand                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7) Overate and threw up          | <input type="checkbox"/> 16) Took out your feelings on yourself (cut yourself, attempted suicide, other) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8) Held your feelings in         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9) Wrote out your feelings       |  |

b) Again, circle the most positive or healthy ways of expressing anxiety. Then look at the unhealthy or destructive ways you have handled your anxiety. Can you see why they were not healthy for you? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Think of positive self-talk that might make you feel a little less anxious. What could you say to yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

You can do the same kind of exercise with any of your emotions that bother you or cause you problems, such as frustration, powerlessness, loneliness, hopelessness, resentment, jealousy, fear, or humiliation. There are lots of these painful emotions. Think of some you especially tend to feel, and write them down.

It is also important to look carefully at what *triggers* these painful emotions. Just as the trigger of a gun shoots it off, *emotional triggers* shoot you into a painful emotional state. *Emotional triggers* are events or happenings that "set you off." For example, a white person calling an African-American a "nigger" is a *trigger* for anger or rage. Most people's anger is triggered when they feel put down, used, betrayed, frustrated, not treated fairly, or disrespected.

Depression may be triggered by many of the same experiences as anger is, and it can also be triggered by experiences where people feel helpless, inadequate, worthless or like a failure, or when they are lonely.

Anxiety is often triggered by uncertainty, lack of control, and inability to solve a problem.

Sometimes we are not aware of the triggering event and don't realize what "set us off." We think we feel the way we do for some reason that has nothing to do with what really started our painful emotions. At other times events may build one upon the other, so there may be multiple triggers.

Think of some of the times you felt angry, depressed, and anxious. Can you identify the triggering events? If you can identify and understand your triggers and how you tend to react, you are more likely to be able to make choices about how to respond in less negative ways. You may

be able to choose behaviors or say things to yourself (change your self-talk) that will help you feel better more quickly.

The next exercise helps you to understand the tie-in between your emotions, your triggers, what you say to yourself, and the outcomes or results, and how you can either make yourself feel better or worse, depending on how you *think* about what has happened.

### EXERCISE 18: CHANGING EMOTIONS AND OUTCOMES

1) First, think of three times you felt really rotten — frustrated, angry, depressed, or whatever — and there were negative outcomes or results from the experiences. Write down the emotion you felt at the time, identify the triggering event (what happened that brought it on), what you thought and said to yourself at the time, and what the negative result was.

EMOTION	TRIGGERING EVENT	NEGATIVE SELF-TALK	RESULT
1) _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
2) _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

2) For the next part of this exercise, think of a time you felt good and there were positive outcomes from the experience. What caused you to feel good (triggering event), what were you thinking at the time, and what was the result?

EMOTION	TRIGGERING EVENT	POSITIVE SELF-TALK	RESULT
1) _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

3) For the final part of this exercise, go back to part one. Write down the emotion and triggering event just as you did before, but change your negative self-talk to more positive statements that might help you get out of your painful feelings. Then write what the changed result might turn out to be.

EMOTION	TRIGGERING EVENT	POSITIVE SELF-TALK	RESULT
1) _____	_____	_____	_____
2) _____	_____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____	_____

This exercise can help you understand how you can either make your feelings worse, and thus make the outcome or results worse, or how you can make yourself feel a little better, with better results, depending on how you think and talk to yourself about what is happening. Try it in real life and see how it works. It isn't foolproof, but if you practice changing your thoughts and feelings into more positive ones, you are likely to have a better time in life. Things will go better for you, and you are less likely to fall into destructive or negative ways of acting out your emotions.

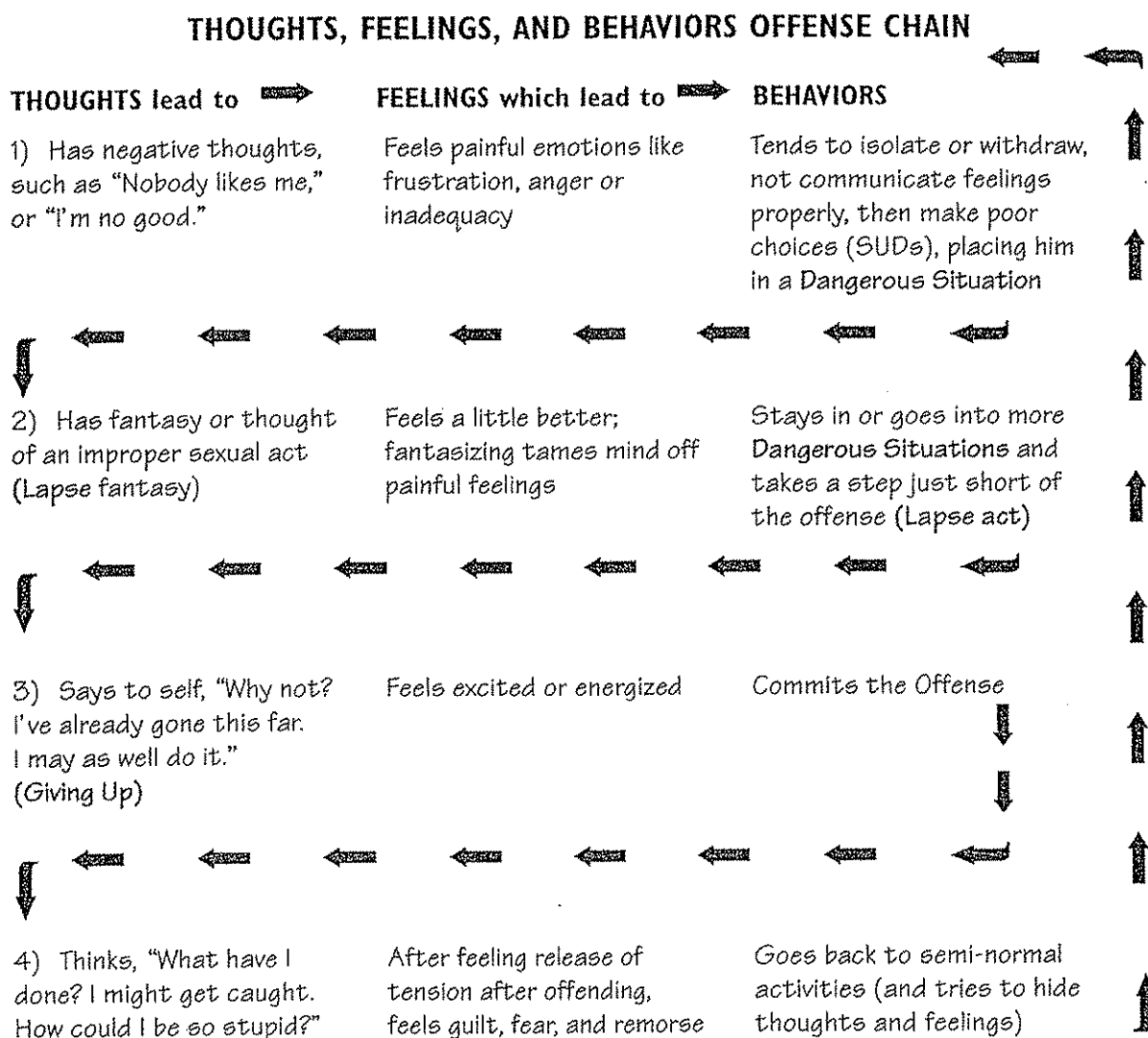
Another good exercise for this is the *Thinking Through Emotions Exercise* on the next page. It ties together your feelings, what is happening, how you experience your emotion(s) physically, what you say to yourself, and what happens. Take a blank copy of this sheet with you in your pocket or wallet, and sometime when everything seems to turn out terribly, take it out and fill in the blanks. Answer the questions, then correct your thinking, see what effect it has on your emotions, and how it might have changed the results. This might help you see all the connections and understand the real power you have over yourself, your feelings, your actions, and your life in general.



## EXERCISE 19. THINKING THROUGH EMOTIONS

<b>EMOTION</b> What emotion am I feeling?	
<b>SITUATION AND SETTING</b> Where am I? Who am I with? What is happening, or what am I doing?	
<b>SYMPTOMS</b> How am I experiencing the emotion physically?	
<b>THOUGHTS</b> What are my thoughts about what is going on?	
<b>RESULTS</b> Behavior: what do I do or not do as a result?	
<b>CORRECTED THOUGHTS</b> What other ways can I think about what is going on?	
<b>EFFECT ON EMOTIONS</b> What effect do my changed ways of thinking have on my feelings?	
<b>CHANGED RESULTS</b> How could my changed thoughts and feelings affect what I do or don't do in this situation?	

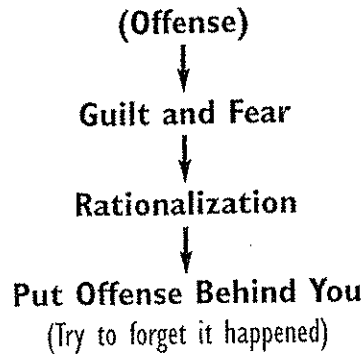
How do emotions fit in with the Offense or Reoffense Chain? It works like this: a *trigger* event starts the whole thing off. Then come thoughts, feelings and behaviors (actions) as shown in the diagram of Jeremiah's Offense Behavior Chain:



This *Offense Chain* is also called a *Cycle of Offending*, because it can repeat itself unless you are aware of it and take action to change your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It can get started at different times, either immediately after an offense when you are feeling badly, after some other triggering event (like being turned down for a date with a someone you really like), or many years down the line when there is a triggering event (like a relationship breakup or loss of job). But you have the power to stop it at any point, just as you can stop your progress down any *Reoffense Chain*.

Did you notice a difference in this chain from the first *Reoffense Chain* you learned? What happens after the offense is committed has been added. After the offense, you may have gotten back to "business as usual," but underneath you probably felt worse about yourself, guilty about the offense, and afraid of what would happen to you. Do you remember feeling that way?

When you are feeling bad, you tend to explain away or rationalize your behavior with thinking errors and distortions (such as, "It's okay, because the same thing happened to me," or "The victim wanted me to do it," or "It won't hurt the victim. He/she will forget about it."). Your guilt and fear begin to fade away, and you try to put your offense behind you. The steps you go through *after* your offense usually look something like this:



Your cycle is probably a little different if you have done a lot of offenses and feel like you can't stop, even when you want to. Offending can sometimes be like an addiction when you are fantasizing and committing your sexual offense over and over again. Most adolescent offenders who are in treatment want to believe that they will never, never offend again, no matter what. But some adolescents have compulsive or addictive offending patterns; that is, they repeat their offenses over and over again, especially when they're feeling bad or anxious. These adolescents – whose typical offenses include exposing themselves, making obscene phone calls, and peeping in windows – usually have frequent fantasies of reoffending, even when they don't want to.

If you are a compulsive/addictive offender, you may be more likely to recognize your problem and to want to find ways of changing. But changing is harder and you may need medications and tougher behavioral rules for yourself. (Talk to your therapist about medications and rules.) Medications won't make you stop offending, but they can help give you a break so you can work on controlling your out-of-control behavior.

To be safe, all offenders must develop careful plans for themselves not to reoffend. Changing behaviors and thoughts is the first step, understanding and working through emotions is the second. In the pages that follow, you will hopefully understand yourself even better and learn to make better choices.

Review the *Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors Offense Chain*, then complete the final exercise of this chapter.



## EXERCISE 20. YOUR OWN THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND OFFENSE CHAIN

1) What do you think triggered your offense? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) What thoughts, feelings, and behaviors followed? Record them in the spaces below.

**THOUGHTS lead to → FEELINGS which lead to → BEHAVIORS**

1) Negative thoughts \_\_\_\_\_ Painful emotions \_\_\_\_\_ Isolation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SUD \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dangerous Situation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Thought or fantasy of offense \_\_\_\_\_ Feelings when thinking of offending \_\_\_\_\_ Further Dangerous Situation \_\_\_\_\_

(Lapse) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Lapse action \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Giving Up thoughts \_\_\_\_\_ Feelings just before offense \_\_\_\_\_ Offense actions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ At time of offense \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Thoughts right after offense \_\_\_\_\_ Feelings immediately after offense \_\_\_\_\_ What you did right after offense \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Later \_\_\_\_\_ Later \_\_\_\_\_ Later \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



3) Now think of what you could have done at each of these points to avoid offending. How could you have changed your self-talk? What could you have done to feel better? What *avoidance* and *escape* strategies could you have used to prevent reoffense at each step? Fill in the blanks with offense-prevention strategies.

**THOUGHTS lead to ———→ FEELINGS which lead to —→ BEHAVIORS**

1) Change thoughts about self to _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Things to do about painful emotions _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Instead of isolating _____ <b>SUD stage</b> _____ <b>In a Dangerous Situation</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
2) If thought or fantasy of offense <b>Lapse</b> , change to _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	What you could do if you _____ still have painful feelings? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>In a further Dangerous Situation</b> _____ <b>After Lapse action</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
3) What to do with _____ <b>Giving Up</b> thoughts _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	What to do with painful _____ feelings just before offense _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>Alternatives to Offense actions</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

## SUMMARY

In this chapter on emotions, you had the opportunity to learn:

- 1) More words to describe your emotions
- 2) Increased awareness of what you are feeling at any given time and in any situation
- 3) More awareness of physical indicators of specific emotions
- 4) More positive ways of handling and expressing emotions
- 5) Knowledge of how you can change your emotions through more positive self-talk
- 6) A better understanding of how both emotions and thoughts affect behavior
- 7) Knowledge of how thoughts, feelings, and behavior interact in the offense chain, and what to do for a more positive outcome

## CHAPTER FIVE

# CHOICES

One of the main ideas of Relapse Prevention is that you always have choices – choices as to behavior, thoughts, and even feelings. You have choices whether to act on urges or whether to change your thoughts. You even have a choice about whether or not to come to therapy. You might not like the consequences of not coming to therapy, because your probation officer might report that you have violated your conditions of probation or parole and lock you up. But you have that choice. It's not likely that anyone is going to actually drag you to therapy.

You don't have choices as to consequences, however. They may vary, but you have no control over them. Even so, you can figure out what the likely consequences of your acts will be and act accordingly. You do this all the time without realizing it. When you become aware of the choices you are actually making, you can make better choices that won't lead you closer to reoffending.

There are both positive and negative consequences for all decisions. For example, if you decide to do your homework, the positive consequences are that you will get a better grade in school, receive more teacher approval, feel good about your accomplishment, and maybe even learn something. But the negative consequences are that the work may be painful or boring, you might miss out on some fun time with friends, or you may miss some favorite TV shows or activities. If, on the other hand, you decide *not* to do your homework, there are also positive and negative consequences. The positive consequences are that you will have more fun, not have to suffer through the work, and get to do what you want to do. The negative consequences may include a failing grade, disapproval from your teacher and parents, not understanding what's going on, and feeling stupid in class.

Some consequences are immediate, some are delayed. For example, in the homework situation, not doing the homework may give you immediate pleasure and joy, but later pain and punishment. So we can say that there are short-term and long-term consequences to every decision you make.

In the situation we talked about in Chapter One, where a neighbor in an emergency asked Bill (who had previously molested a child) to babysit, Bill had the choice of saying "yes" or "no." Let us look at the consequences of his initial decision. If he said "no" at the *SUD (Seemingly Unimportant Decision)* stage, the main positive consequence is that he would be certain of not reoffending, because he would not be placing himself in a dangerous situation. The negative consequences are that he would be letting down a neighbor in need and might feel mean and unhelpful. On the other hand, if he said "yes," the positive consequences are that he would be helping the neighbor and feel worthwhile. The negative consequences are both short-term (he is now in a place where he is able to commit a sex offense with the neighbor's child) and long-term (he might let down his guard and do even more risky things in a later situation), placing him in a position where he is much more likely to reoffend.

Have you ever made lists of pros and cons, positive and negative results, for decisions you have had to make in the past? Usually people just make two lists – one for the positive consequences or aspects, the other for the negative. In the next exercise, we will be doing this in a little more complex way, a way that can help you see the consequences of your choices more clearly.

Before you do the exercise, look at the example that has been filled in below. Jamal, 15 years old, is trying to decide whether or not to ask Jalissa, a girl he barely knows but would like to know better, to a dance. His choices are to ask her or not to ask her.

### POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES SAMPLE CHART

CHOICE	POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES	NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
Ask Jalissa to the dance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) She might say yes.</li> <li>2) I'd feel great if she said yes.</li> <li>3) I'd be no worse off if she said no than if I hadn't asked.</li> <li>4) I'd find out if she liked me.</li> <li>5) Even if she said no, she might give me some signal that she would go out with me another time.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) She might turn me down.</li> <li>2) I'd feel embarrassed and/or rotten if she turned me down.</li> <li>3) I'd be afraid no girls would like me.</li> </ol>
Don't ask Jalissa to the dance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I couldn't be turned down.</li> <li>2) If I got to know her better first, I'd have a better chance of her accepting me.</li> <li>3) My ego would remain intact.</li> <li>4) I could still daydream about her liking me, without having to test reality.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Maybe she would have gone with me.</li> <li>2) She might find someone else while I'm trying to get to know her.</li> <li>3) I may be missing a great time with her.</li> <li>4) I might never know if she likes me.</li> <li>5) I'd feel like a chicken.</li> </ol>

This gives Jamal a nice clear way to select his options. It is easier to balance the pros and cons when you can see the positive and negative consequences of both doing the act and not doing it. The same chart can be used for different choices, rather than just the choice of doing or not doing a single thing. For example, Jamal might have listed as his choices: asking Jalissa to the dance versus asking her to go to a movie instead, or asking Jalissa to the dance versus asking another girl who he knew likes him and probably would accept. Now try out the positive and negative consequences of a decision you have made in the next exercise.

## EXERCISE 21. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

**Part 1)** In this part of the exercise, think of a time you had to make a decision (not relating to your offense). What were your two major choices? Write them under "Choice" in the two sections at the left of the chart. Then write down the positive and negative consequences of each.

CHOICE	POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES	NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____
	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____

Filling out this decision chart can help you understand your decision more clearly. Did you make the right one?

**Part 2)** This time you make the same analysis of your decision to commit your offense at the point of *Giving Up*, the final step on your offense chain. Look at the consequences of committing your offense versus not committing it. Perhaps if you had weighed out the consequences before your offense, you might have acted differently.

CHOICE	POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES	NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
Commit my offense (name your offense)	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____
Do <u>not</u> commit my offense	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____

You can do this exercise at each step of your offense chain. You can make it more detailed by dividing the consequences into short-term and long-term. The chart on the next page does just that.

**Part 3)** In this part, think back to your own SUD (*Seemingly Unimportant Decision*). In the top section, write down what your choice was. On the bottom, write another choice you could have made instead. Then, fill in the short and long term positive and negative consequences of each.

SHORT AND LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES				
CHOICE	SHORT TERM CONSEQUENCES		LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES	
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>SUD:</b> What I did _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	
<b>SUD:</b> What I could have done instead _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____	

You can also use this system with thoughts and feelings as well as behavior. In the next section of this exercise, you will have the opportunity to try this.

**Part 4)** Pick a time when you felt "put-down" by someone. It could be a parent, other family member, teacher, or friend. What was that situation? Write it here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Think about a positive statement (positive self-talk) you could have made to yourself at that moment. Then think of a negative statement (negative self-talk). Write both down below. What would the consequences have been? Note that the consequences can be feelings, not just happenings.

CHOICE	POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES	NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
Positive self-talk statement: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____
Negative self-talk statement: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____	1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____

As you have seen, at each point along your offense chain, you had the opportunity to make choices. Any time you choose to think, act, or feel a certain way, there are positive and negative consequences. If you make yourself aware of the consequences, you have the opportunity to make different, healthier choices. You have the power to find different ways of looking at things, different ways to act, and different ways to feel based on what you say to yourself. You have the power of choice.

In the next exercise, you have the opportunity to look at some poor choices.

## EXERCISE 22. CHANGING POOR CHOICES

Read the following scenarios. Write down all of the poor choices that Franco and Elizabeth made, starting from the beginning. Then write down what better choices they could have made.

1) Franco, age 15, just got out of a juvenile detention facility for molesting a neighbor child. At 3:00 p.m., he felt hungry. Since there was nothing he wanted to eat in the refrigerator at home, he decided to walk to the store. The shortest way was to cut through the schoolyard, so he walked that way. A 6-year-old girl was looking for her ball. He saw it in the bushes, so he took her to it. She said she was hungry, so he offered to buy her some food at the store if she would wait for him. He went to the store. A small boy was crying in the back of the store, because he couldn't find his mother. Franco gave the boy a piece of gum and the child stopped crying. He told the child to come with him and he would find the mother. The mother came along just then, so he paid for what he had taken and left the store. On the way out, he stopped to talk to a group of young children. They asked him if he would coach their basketball team. He said yes and agreed to meet with them the following day. He left then to take the food he bought to the child he had met in the schoolyard.

There are at least 9 or 10 poor choices Franco made here. List them in the first column. Include thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Then list the better choices he could have made in the second column.

### POOR CHOICE

### BETTER CHOICE

1) _____	_____
_____	_____
2) _____	_____
_____	_____
3) _____	_____
_____	_____
4) _____	_____
_____	_____
5) _____	_____
_____	_____
6) _____	_____
_____	_____
7) _____	_____
_____	_____
8) _____	_____
_____	_____
9) _____	_____
_____	_____



2) Elizabeth was on probation for molesting her younger sister Courtney. She was required to live at her grandmother's, away from home. Nobody was home and Elizabeth felt very lonesome. Last Thursday, she called home to talk to her mother during the day even though her mother usually was still at work. Courtney answered the phone. She told Courtney how sorry she was about what she had done, how much she loved and missed her, and how much she would like to be able to talk to Courtney in person. Courtney said she would come over on the bus. When she got there, Elizabeth invited her into the house. They sat down on the sofa and talked for a while. Elizabeth began to think about how loving and warm it would be to touch her sister's body. Elizabeth asked if she could hug Courtney, because Elizabeth felt so lonely. Courtney agreed. In the process of hugging, Elizabeth's hand accidentally rubbed against her sister's breast. Courtney didn't say anything. Elizabeth figured, "Since I've gone this far and she doesn't mind, I may as well touch the rest of her." She acted on these thoughts, committing another sex offense.

In this scenario, there are about 10 or 11 poor choices Elizabeth made. What are they? Include thoughts, feelings and behaviors. What better choices could Elizabeth have made?

**POOR CHOICE**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_

**BETTER CHOICE**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3) Look again at Elizabeth's situation. Which of Elizabeth's behaviors were SUDs? What were the *Dangerous Situations* she placed herself in? How did she *Lapse*? What did say to herself that was *Giving Up*? Write each of those in the spaces below. (Notice the increasingly dangerous situations Elizabeth put herself in by her poor choices and that she lapsed both in thought and behavior.)

**SUD** (Seemingly Unimportant Decision) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dangerous Situation** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Lapse(s)** (Thought and/or action bringing Elizabeth very close to offending) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Giving Up** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Offense:** Touching her sister's private parts.

Can you see how Elizabeth may not have been aware of where her initial actions were leading, or thought she had everything under control? How she may not have been aware of the choices she was making?

One of your treatment goals is to become more conscious of your choices and decisions. Arms and legs do not move without your choosing to make them move. Sex offenses don't just happen. You made a series of decisions and chose to commit your offense. Even if you allowed a younger child to do something to you, that was a choice you made. As we said at the beginning of this chapter, if you are more conscious of your choices and their consequences, you are more likely to make good choices, choices that won't get you into trouble. So think first, and think things through before you act.

Another way to make good choices is to look at some of the reasons why you made the past choices you did. Most people who make poor choices do it in order to meet their emotional needs, although they've chosen negative ways to do that. Elizabeth's choice to reoffend was a negative way to deal with her loneliness and need to feel loved. Franco's may have been because he felt crummy about himself and wanted to be liked and looked up to. Both of them chose to satisfy their needs in ways that were dangerous for them and for the children they were with.

For all the needs you have, there are negative and positive ways to satisfy them; the positive ways are ones that won't lead you down the *Offense Chain*. For example, Elizabeth could have called her mother at work or her counselor or a friend, she could have gone over to a friend's house, she could have run at the track or gone to a movie, she could have written a poem or drawn a picture about her loneliness, or she could have talked herself into feeling better, like saying, "This loneliness will pass. I can do something positive for myself right now that will make me feel better."

In the next exercise, we will look at some needs that people try to satisfy by offending, and find better alternatives to satisfy those needs.



**NEEDS BEHIND  
SEX OFFENSES****NEGATIVE WAYS I'VE MET THIS NEED****BETTER WAYS OF SATISFYING THEM**

Power or control  
(feeling helpless,  
out of control)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

Excitement (feeling  
bored, life is dull)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

Caring, connection, or  
love (feeling lonely)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

To be looked up to, admired,  
respected, or thought capa-  
ble (feeling inadequate)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

To release or vent anger  
(feeling frustrated or  
angry)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual satisfaction, or to  
fulfill sexual fantasy  
(feeling sexual)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

To feel whole, or like your  
life has some purpose  
(feeling empty inside)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

Other need (you name)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

Other need (you name)

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

You are going to have urges, fantasies, or opportunities to offend in the future, even if you feel sure now that you will never have them again. Having urges, fantasies and opportunities to offend doesn't make you a bad person. It is what you do with these urges, fantasies and opportunities that counts.

A final skill related to making good choices is *Problem Solving*. Every problem has lots of solutions. Some of these solutions are better than others, based on the consequences that happen afterward. Once again, no solutions are all negative or all positive. There are positive and negative consequences to each.

When you have a problem, it is a good idea to brainstorm lots of solutions. Make a long list.

If you have friends who can help, make them part of the process. After you make your list, cross out the impossible or clearly negative solutions. Look carefully at the ones you have left. Which ones seem to be the better ones? Will you be able to use any of them? What are the likely consequences of each? Think this over carefully. Finally pick the best one. (You can also use your Chart of Positive and Negative Consequences in Exercise 21 to think through the results.)

In the following exercise, you will have the opportunity to generate a variety of solutions to problems, and then to choose the best one. For example, if Walt wants to go to the movies next Friday, but doesn't have the money now, what are some possible solutions?

- 1) Borrow money from a friend
- 2) Ask employer for an advance
- 3) Ask employer if he can work overtime
- 4) Not go
- 5) Ask neighbors if they need some yardwork done at a reasonable price

### EXERCISE 24. PROBLEM SOLVING

For the following problems, write down at least four different solutions. Then, after thinking of the likely consequences, in the left hand margin, place a check in front of the solution you think would be the best one.

- 1) Lee got an F on his algebra test. He doesn't understand the material. What can he do?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Donna loaned her tape recorder to her friend Jack. Jack lost it. What should Donna do if Jack doesn't replace it?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Abe's brother always puts him down. Abe would like this to change. What can he do?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_

4) Juan disrespected Luis's mother in front of his friends. What can Luis do about this?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

5) Neal likes Janice. He wants to know if she likes him. What can he do to find out?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

6) Andre is being pressured to join a gang. Gangs rule his school and neighborhood. He wants to be safe, but he doesn't want to be part of a gang. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

7) Bill just got grounded for the week for not doing his chores. He had finally gotten a date to go to the senior prom this Saturday night with Colleen, a girl he has wanted to ask out all year. What should/could he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

8) Lola has been going out with someone she's wanted to date for a long time. He is pressuring her to have sex, but she doesn't feel ready yet. She is afraid of losing him if she doesn't give in. What can she do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

9) Steve's parents are very strict. All his friends get to come home at midnight on the weekends, but his parents make him come home at 10:00 p.m. There is going to be a big party this weekend. Steve wants to go and stay until midnight. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

10) Jake is being physically abused by his father. He wants it to stop, but doesn't want his father to get into trouble or leave the home. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

11) Penny's parents get drunk and violent every weekend. This really upsets her. What can she do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

12) Rob is being molested by his older brother and his brother's friends. He loves his older brother, but wants the sexual abuse to stop. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

13) Sam has dyslexia and can't read. He is smart, so he has been hiding it for years. He would like to learn to read, but doesn't want anyone to know he can't read. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

14) Luke's best friend Matt talks about everything to everyone. He tells others Luke's secrets. How can Luke remain best friends with Matt but get him to shut up?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

15) Abe is a senior in high school. He plans to go on to college. He just found out that his girlfriend Marilyn is pregnant. He wants her to get an abortion, but she doesn't believe in it. What can he do now?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

16) Eddie didn't study for his history midterm. He just found out that he won't be able to play football if he doesn't get a B on the exam. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_

- c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 d) \_\_\_\_\_

17) Kent realizes he has a drug problem and can't seem to kick it by himself. He is afraid to tell his parents. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 d) \_\_\_\_\_

18) Pete's step-dad, who just got out of prison, has all kinds of stolen property in the house. Pete's mom needs the step-dad there to support the family. Pete is on probation and is afraid that if the police or his probation officer find out about the stuff, they will blame him. What can he do?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 d) \_\_\_\_\_

19) Linda's mother is in jail. None of her friends know. Linda is embarrassed about it. There is a mother-daughter event at school and all Linda's friends and their mothers are going. Linda has to give a speech there. What should she do or say about her missing mother?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 d) \_\_\_\_\_

As you can see, often there is no solution that is really good in these situations. Sometimes it is necessary to compromise on the best of bad solutions. But there are always choices available, and some are better than others. Looking at the probable consequences of each and balancing them is a way of finding what is likely to work the best.

## SUMMARY

What you could have gained from this chapter:

- 1) Awareness that you have choices in almost every one of your acts, thoughts, or emotions
- 2) Awareness that each choice you make has positive and negative consequences
- 3) Knowledge about different ways of weighing the consequences of your choices
- 4) An understanding of how choices fit in your *Offense Chain*
- 5) An understanding of how your needs underlie the choices you make
- 6) Increased awareness of the needs that were behind your own offense
- 7) Awareness that you have many choices in fulfilling your needs
- 8) Recognition of choices in problem solving and ways to make better choices